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Minutes 04_14_11

AYHSC Minutes -April 14, 2011
5:30pm-7:00pm

Welcome: John Scheft, Jack Flood, Carlene Newell, Kathy Hirsh, Ethel Doyle, Cindy Sheridan, Rebecca Wolfe, Colleen Leger, Lynn Horgan and Bryan Gallagher

Coalition Updates:

Race to Nowhere

The meeting began with members reviewing handouts summarizing the Community Member Evaluations of Race to Nowhere. Colleen asked for feedback about the documentary, panel discussion and turnout. She stated that over seventy-five surveys were completed and provided input from the community on why they attended the event, topics of concern and changes they would like to see for schools, community, and family (as a result of the evening's program).

Members offered insights on the documentary and discussed reasonable changes that could be implemented in town. Mindfulness education was suggested for professional development for teachers, and for advisory group exercises for students. Ethel spoke about eliminating homework during school breaks, and shared her concerns about how homework affects kids with different learning styles, as well as those who are working and taking Advanced Placement classes. Carlene commented on the loss of family time. Jack mentioned that there are guidelines recommending 20 minutes of homework per subject. Kathy commented on the lack of resources and opportunities for students to connect with adults, and inquired about the June override and the role of the Coalition. It was suggested that the Coalition educate the community about some of the protective factors and resources in the community that are at risk of being cut, and the potential consequences of these cuts for youth and families.

Guiding Good Choices (GGC)

Lynn and Cindy summarized the outcome of the final workshop of their GGC series, which wrapped up on Wednesday night. Attendees provided feedback on each class via pre- and post surveys. Information received from the final class indicated that parents appreciated and wanted more opportunities to connect with other parents.

They liked being able to share stories, interact with each other, obtain feedback, and have discussions in a relaxed and open environment. One parent remarked, "I liked how the third class (where the children attended) gave them options to use on their own."

Youth Initiatives

The Coalition and the Robbins Teen Library are co-sponsoring a "50/50/50" public service announcement contest. The contest calls for videos that are 50 seconds in length and submitted within 50 days. The winner will receive a \$50 prize. The videos should contain positive messages about why teens choose not to get involved with alcohol. This contest is based on an AlcoholEdu campaign, which supports youth to look at the influence of media and encourages them to promote reasons why they "choose not to drink".

Kathy helped to coordinate a social norms campaign at Arlington High School by connecting the Coalition with students in Computer Aided Drafting and Design (CADD) classes at AHS. Colleen met with the students in March and explained the proposal and criteria for the campaign, which is to use positive messages to correct youth misperceptions of alcohol use among high school students. Recently, students sent in questions to Colleen and are now in the process of designing the products. Hopefully, Coalition members can vote on the products next

meeting.

Tobacco Free Peer Leadership Program

Members reviewed the flyer created by Mt. Auburn on this program and commented favorably on the simple, clean design and effective message. Credit was given to Mary DeCoursey and Mary Johnson of Mt. Auburn for creating the flyer. Carlene mentioned the 6th graders are in the process of designing t-shirts with images and messages indicating “reasons you shouldn’t smoke”. These designs could be printed on an actual t-shirt and used as a potential fundraiser at Town Day.

Upcoming Trainings and Events:

Think:Kids - Parenting, Teaching & Treating Challenging Kids -April 26th, 2011.

Location: Ottoson Middle School from 6:30-9:00. Lynn informed the group that she and Mary DeCoursey are assisting Phyllis Brown-Director of Arlington Youth Counseling Center with the coordination of this program. This free program comes highly recommended and will be offered as part of the Arlington Parent Forums. It is open to parents, educators, clinicians, pediatricians and professionals who care about kids.

Drug Take-Back Events

The 2nd National Drug Take-Back Day, organized by the DEA, will take place on April 30th, 2011. Location: The Community Safety Building from 10:00am – 2:00pm. Colleen is looking for volunteers that day for various jobs related to managing the disposal of medications and recycling containers. Accepted items: unwanted medications. John Scheft suggested we make it easy for seniors to dispose of medications. Carlene added that a bin could be provided at housing sites and Coalition members could bring meds to the event for them. Both felt this would accommodate seniors who may not be able to get to the event. Colleen said that the social worker for the Council on Aging posted information on the event at senior housing. Colleen said she would follow up with the geriatric nurse about members’ suggestions.

In addition, medication and sharps disposal will be offered at Community Collection Day, on May 7th, 2011.

Location: The DPW Town Yard from 9:00am – 1:00pm.

Arlington Enrichment Collaborative (AEC) Fundraiser – King Arthur’s Feast

Colleen handed out flyers advertising this fundraiser and provided information on the format of the event. This will be offered on May 7th, 2011 (7:00pm-10:00pm) at the Arlington Town Hall

Future Projects

ACMI: Spotlight on AYHSC

Lynn mentioned that communication is underway with the Arlington Community Media Inc. (ACMI) to promote Health and Human Services programs and services. Lynn has been in conversation with Sara at ACMI about ways to highlight AYHSC initiatives. Coalition members brainstormed ways ACMI can support the work of AYHSC, including: broadcasting parent forums; inviting ACMI to cover an event (like the Drug Take Back); spotlighting Diversion (educating the community on what it is, why it is important, what it offers); covering health and safety day at Arlington High School; promoting positive social norms messages through Drama/CADD students; developing a short PSA on AYHSC (when it was created, the mission, vision and initiatives that are underway); and covering AHS school-wide community service day.

Opportunities for Coalition Advocacy

HB 00098- An Act relative to underage alcohol consumption – Colleen gave a brief synopsis of this bill and mentioned that Senator Donnelly is on the committee to which it was assigned. John expressed interest and wanted to know more about the bill. This discussion will be continued at next meeting and identification of ways to support bill if interested.

Revisiting Alcohol Sales Tax

Colleen stated that the repeal of the state sales tax on alcohol has resulted in the loss of substance abuse prevention related programming. The Needham Coalition wants to revisit this issue and get it back on the agenda. Questions were raised about procedure of reaching out to other Coalitions and whether members think it is worthwhile.

Parent Survey & Follow-up Media Campaign

Deacon will be providing a survey that we can use to assess attitudes, knowledge, perceptions, and behaviors

among parents related to substance use. Information collected from this data will be used to create positive messages targeting adults in the community

Health Recreation and Cops Summer Experience (H.R.C.)

H.R.C., a summer program coordinated by AYHSC, the Recreation Department and the Police, will be offered for the 3rd time this June. It will run from June 28 to June 30th, at the Brackett School. Ideas generated for health component include mindfulness and refusal skills. Bryan reminded group that this successful program is very popular and does well when not too much is scheduled into the day.

Next Coalition Meeting: May 19, 2011